

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-6 (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) A method of attaching a straw package to a bag, the method comprising:

providing a plurality of bags having a base and a first side wall and a second side wall at an acute angle with respect to the first side wall, wherein the bags are constructed to stand with the base located toward the bottom of the bag;

positioning a bag on a conveyor belt such that the bag lies on the conveyor belt on a first side wall, so that the second side wall is at an acute angle with the conveyor belt;

~~providing a plurality of straw packages from above the conveyor belt;~~

providing a lever having a depressing arm and a pivoting arm;

rotating the pivoting arm of the lever to displace the depressing arm downward toward the conveyor belt to apply applying a straw package onto the second side wall at an acute angle to the conveyor belt.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein providing a plurality of bags includes providing a plurality of flexible bags wherein the first and second side walls comprise film.

9. (Currently Amended) A method of attaching a straw package to a bag, the method comprising:

providing a plurality of bags having a base, a first side wall and a second side wall, wherein the first side wall and the second side wall share at least two edges, and the bags are constructed to stand on the base;

positioning a bag on a conveyor belt such that the bag lays on the conveyor belt on the first side wall, and the second side wall is at an acute angle with the conveyor belt;

providing a plurality of straw packages from above the conveyor belt;

providing a lever having a depressing arm and a pivoting arm;

rotating the pivoting arm of the lever to displace the depressing arm downward toward the conveyor belt to apply a straw package to the second side wall at an acute angle with the conveyor belt and substantially parallel to the second side wall.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein providing a plurality of bags includes providing a plurality of flexible bags wherein the first and second side walls comprise film and are welded together at the two edges.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of attaching a straw package to a bag, the method comprising:

providing a plurality of bags having a base and a first side wall and a second side wall at an acute angle with respect to the first side wall, wherein the bags are constructed to stand with the base located toward the bottom of the bag;

positioning a bag on the conveyor belt such that the bag lays on the conveyor belt on a first side wall, so that the second side wall is at an acute angle with the conveyor belt;

providing a transfer drum above the conveyor belt, the transfer drum being rotatable about an axis substantially parallel to the second side wall;

providing a plurality of straw packages on the periphery of the transfer drum, a straw package being positioned substantially parallel to the second side wall;

providing a lever having a depressing arm and a pivoting arm; and

rotating the pivoting arm of the lever to displace the depressing arm downward toward the conveyor belt to apply ~~applying~~ the straw package onto the second side wall while maintaining the straw package substantially parallel to the second side wall.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, further comprising applying an adhesive on the straw package prior to applying the straw package onto the second side wall.

13. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for applying straw packages onto bags, the apparatus comprising:

a conveyor belt constructed and arranged to convey a plurality of bags;

a straw package supplying assembly;

a transfer assembly positioned above the conveyor belt,

the transfer assembly constructed and arranged to receive a plurality of straw packages from the straw package supply assembly,

the transfer assembly having a straw retaining member constructed and arranged to retain the straw packages at an acute angle to the conveyor belt, the transfer assembly also including a straw applying member having a depressing arm and a pivoting arm, wherein rotating the pivoting arm of the lever displaces the depressing arm downward toward the conveyor belt to displace a straw package away from the retaining member and to apply the straw package onto one of the plurality of bags.

14. (Currently Amended) A system for applying straw packages onto bags, the system comprising:

a plurality of bags having a first side and a second side and a base, wherein the bags are constructed and arranged to stand on the base;

a conveyor belt constructed and arranged to convey the plurality of bags with the first side facing up and the second side contacting the conveyor belt;

a plurality of straw packages connected to one another, the straw packages having an adhesive thereon;

a transfer assembly positioned above the conveyor belt, the transfer assembly having

a straw retaining member constructed and arranged to receive and retain the straw packages substantially parallel to the first side of the bags,

a disconnecting member to disconnect one straw package from the plurality of straw packages, and

a straw applying member having a depressing arm and a pivoting arm, wherein rotating the pivoting arm of the lever displaces the depressing arm downward toward the conveyor belt ~~constructed and arranged~~ to displace a straw package away from the retaining member and to apply the straw package onto one of the plurality of bags on the conveyor belt such that the straw package is attached to the bag via the adhesive.